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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 150903814-5999-02]

RIN 0648-XF073

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Quota Transfer

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the State of Maine is transferring a portion of its 2016 commercial summer flounder quota to the State of Connecticut. These quota adjustments are necessary to comply with the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan quota transfer provision. This announcement informs the public of the revised commercial quotas for Maine and Connecticut.

DATES: Effective [*Insert date of filing for public inspection at the Office of the Federal Register*], through December 31, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cynthia Hanson, Fishery Management Specialist, (978)-281-9180.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found in 50 CFR 648.100 through

648.110. These regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from Maine through North Carolina. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state are described in § 648.102, and the initial 2016 allocations were published on December 28, 2015 (80 FR 80689).

The final rule implementing Amendment 5 to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan, as published in the **Federal Register** on December 17, 1993 (58 FR 65936), provided a mechanism for transferring summer flounder commercial quota from one state to another. Two or more states, under mutual agreement and with the concurrence of the NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator, can transfer or combine summer flounder commercial quota under § 648.102(c)(2). The Regional Administrator is required to consider the criteria in § 648.102(c)(2)(i)(A) through (C) in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations.

Maine is transferring 3,800 lb (1,724 kg) of summer flounder commercial quota to Connecticut. This transfer was prompted by state officials in Connecticut to ensure their commercial summer flounder quota is not exceeded. The revised summer flounder quotas for calendar year 2016 are now: Maine, 64 lb (29 kg); and Connecticut, 187,166 lb (84,897 kg); based on the initial quotas published in the 2016-2018 Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Specifications on December 28, 2015 (80 FR 80689).

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: December 9, 2016

Emily H. Menashes,

Acting Director,

Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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